

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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P 231200Z DEC 77
FM AMCONSUL PALERMO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2313
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL TRIESTE
AMCONSUL TURIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PALERMO 0914

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: REGIONAL PRESIDENT BONFIGLIO RESIGNS

REFS: (A) PALERMO 882, (B) PALERMO 859

1. AS PROJECTED (REF B), SICILIAN REGIONAL PRESIDENT ANGELO BONFIGLIO (DC) AND FOUR-PARTY CENTER LEFT REGIONAL GIUNTA RESIGNED AFTER PASSAGE OF USDOLS 3.6 BILLION REGIONAL BUDGET IN EARLY MORNING HOURS OF DECEMBER 22. REGIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS ADJOURNED UNTIL JANUARY 16 WHEN ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT AND GIUNTA WILL BE FIRST ITEM ON AGENDA.

2. INFORMAL, INTERPARTY CONSULTATIONS HAVE BEGUN UNDER DIRECTION OF DC REGIONAL SECRETARY NICOLETTI TO FIND AGREEMENT ON PERSONNEL AND PROGRAM CONTENT OF

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NEW REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION. FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS ARE NOW SCHEDULED TO BEGIN ON JANUARY 10 BY WHICH TIME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WILL HAVE TO NAME REGIONAL PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE. RUMOR MILL CURRENTLY FAVORS CANDIDACY OF OUTGOING BUDGET ASSESSOR, PIERSANTI

MATTARELLA, WHO VISITED U.S. LAST AUGUST AS IVP GRANTEE.

3. KEY TO DEVELOPMENT OF NEW REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS PROGRAM IS ACCORD WITHIN ISLAND'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY THAT WOULD OVERCOME PERSONAL AND FACTIONAL DIFFERENCES (REF A) BETWEEN THE ANDREOTTI-LED MAJORITY AND MINORITY FACTION DOMINATED BY PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER GULLOTTI. REASSURING HERE ARE SIGNS THAT DC IS NOW MOVING FARTHER BACK FROM BRINK OF COMMUNIST INSERTION IN ASSEMBLY MAJORITY UPON WHICH NEW REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE BASED. EVEN COMMUNISTS THEMSELVES, DURING CURRENT PHASE OF INFORMAL NEGOTIATIONS, SEEM TO BE TALKING LESS ABOUT PARTICIPATION IN EXISTING GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURE AND MORE IN FAVOR OF SETTING UP NEW SUPERVISORY AND ADVISORY ORGANS WHICH WOULD CONTROL EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES AND IN WHICH PCI (AND LIBERALS TOO FOR THAT MATTER) WOULD HAVE FORMAL AND ACCEPTED ROLE.

4. REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IS NOT ALONE IN GROPING FOR NEW FORMS IN THE DC-PCI RELATIONSHIP. WITH THE RULE OF THE GAME APPARENTLY AT AN UNPRECEDENTED STATE OF FLUX AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, LOCAL POLITICS, AT LEAST IN SICILY, HAVE BEGUN TO PURSUE GOVERNING FORMULAS WHICH AT ONE POINT WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED ABERRATIONAL. IN A FIRST FOR SICILY, FOR
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EXAMPLE, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL CITY OF TRAPANI HAS A NEWLY-ELECTED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT MAYOR AND A DC-PSI-PSDI GIUNTA BASED ON A CITY COUNCIL MAJORITY WHICH INCLUDES THE COMMUNISTS AND REPUBLICANS. AS ELSEWHERE, THE DC HAS PAID THE HIGHEST PRICE IN TRAPANI FOR THIS NEW ARRANGEMENT WITH PARTY MINORITY FORCES (FANFANIANI AND RUFFINI-FOLLOWERS) WALKING OUT OF THE CITY COUNCIL PRIOR TO THE VOTE WHICH ELECTED THE GIUNTA. AFTER NEARLY TWO MONTHS, PALERMO CITY GOVERNMENT CRISIS ALSO CONTINUES WITH DEBATE NOW CENTERED ON YET ANOTHER NOVEL PCI PROPOSAL THAT WOULD BRING PARTY CLOSER TO GREATER SHARE OF POWER IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT VIZ. A MONOCOLORE DC OPERATING GIUNTA WHICH WOULD FEATURE ASSESSORS "WITHOUT PORTFOLIO" REPRESENTING ALL FIVE OF THE OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL ARC PARTIES TO ASSIST THE MAYOR IN MANAGING THE CITY.

5. IT WILL BE NOTED THAT NOWHERE IN THE ABOVE INNOVATIONS - BOTH REAL AND PROPOSED - HAS THE PCI YET MOVED DIRECTLY INTO A GIUNTA WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS NOR HAS PCI PICKED UP THE CURRENT NATIONAL PARTY THEME OF DIRECT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN

"EMERGENCY GOVERNMENTS" AT THE REGIONAL OR LOCAL LEVEL.
WE WOULD NOTE IN PASSING, HOWEVER, THAT THE ONLY
CONSTANT STAR IN THE PRESENT SICILIAN FIRMAMENT IS
THE COMMUNIST PRESIDENT OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY,
PANCRAZIO DEPASQUALE, WHO SEEMS TO HOLD THE ONLY
HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL POSITION IN THE ISLAND THAT IS
NOT CURRENTLY UP FOR GRABS.
COLLINS

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